



THIS WEEK IN IRAQ

The Newsletter of the Multi-National Force - Iraq

www.mfn-iraq.com

May 8, 2006

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"When I return to America I can tell my children and some day my grandchildren that I served with men that stood up and did the right thing for their country."

- Lt. Col. Steven Greaf, Page 5



Iraqi Soldiers march in formation during a graduation ceremony held at Camp Habbaniyah in al Anbar Province on April 30. This is the first class made up entirely of Sunnis to graduate from the Habbaniyah Regional Training Center.

Sons of al Anbar

First all-Sunni class graduates from basic training

Story and photos by Sgt. Jeremy Pitcher
This Week in Iraq staff writer

HABBANIYAH — The first graduating class from Habbaniyah could make a world of difference in al Anbar Province.

The 1st Iraqi Army Division graduated the first of five all Sunni boot camp class in Iraq on April 30. About 975 Soldiers graduated from the Habbaniyah Regional Training Center, joining 250,000 Iraqi Security Forces serving around the country. These new Soldiers were recruited from the predominately Sunni province in order to bring a recognizable and trusted face to security forces there.

Whether they are Sunni or not does not make a difference for the new graduates. They are Iraqis.

"The most important thing I am taking

from this class is the ability to fight, to protect my country, to help my people and to fight terrorism," one graduate said.

Lt. Col. Steven Greaf, training officer in charge of the basic training battalion for the Sunni outreach program, said this is a great event that will show benefits in the province.

"This is very significant because a lot of the insurgency is in the Sunni regions of the al Anbar Province," he said. "All these guys came from the al Anbar Province. If we can get these guys into the army and make them Soldiers in the army, they will start supporting the government."

"Another advantage is these guys have the home-court advantage here," said

See *Class*, Page 5

GENERAL CASEY'S CORNER**A Coalition of support**

May 14, 2006 marks the second anniversary of the Multi-National Force - Iraq.

This past year, MNF-I Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines have made great strides toward our strategic objectives in Iraq: preventing terrorists from creating a safe haven that threatens Iraq and other nations; partnering with Iraq's increasingly effective security forces; fostering conditions for Iraq's democracy to develop; and helping Iraq create institutions that encourage the free exchange of ideas and respect the fundamental rights of all citizens.

Coalition and Iraqi Security Force partnerships advance all these goals. This cooperation increases operational effectiveness against the terrorists and insurgents who seek to derail progress in Iraq. The Coalition will continue to assist increasingly capable Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi government in securing their liberty and charting a peaceful, prosperous future for the Iraqi people.

The signs of progress in Iraq are clear. This past year, millions of Iraqis voted on a constitution and elected the first democratic government; children have returned to school; thousands of new businesses have opened; and the vast majority of Iraqis express hope for their future.

About 78 percent of Iraq's almost 16 million registered voters voted in the December 2005 election - that's more than 12 million people. For the

By Gen. George W. Casey
Multi-National Force - Iraq
Commanding General



first time in Iraq's history, the national government will represent all of Iraq's people. Broad representation and unity make this new government a strong foundation for progress in Iraq. We will support this new government as it works to bring security and prosperity to Iraq.

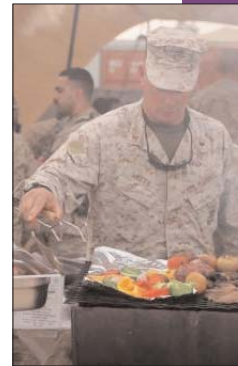
There will be challenges. The terrorists will continue attempts to slow democratic progress in Iraq. But the Iraqi people continue to stand firm against terrorist intimidation. Iraqi leaders have pledged to rein in illegal militias and expand the rule of law. Iraqis are continuing to build strong security forces to take the fight to the terrorists and secure Iraq's democratic gains.

Much of the progress in Iraq is because of effective operations against foreign terrorists and their support networks. In places like Mosul, Tal Afar, al Qaim, the Euphrates River Valley and east Baghdad; Coalition and Iraqi forces have defeated terrorist cells and denied terrorist infiltration.

Iraq is closer to self-reliance than it was a year ago and Coalition units have provided crucial support at every step. On this second anniversary

The terrorists will continue attempts to slow democratic progress in Iraq. But the Iraqi people continue to stand firm against terrorist intimidation.

of the founding of MNF-I, every Coalition member can be proud of Multi-National Force-Iraq's accomplishments and look forward to continued progress in the year ahead.

Photos around the Fertile Crescent

U.S. Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer Stuart White, with 7th Marine Regimental Combat Team, prepares food during a barbecue at al Asad Air Base.



Marine Cpl. Joseph Digloramo seeks cover from a sniper's small-arms fire in Ramadi.



Staff Sgt. Paul Vanoudeheusden pushes Staff Sgt. Jorge Davila as Davila's military working dog, Kibo, attacks during a demonstration on FOB Remagen in Tikrit.



Col. James Pasquarette with the 4th Infantry Division presents a certificate to Italian Army Maj. Gen. Alessandro Montuori, the deputy commander, Multi-National Corps - Iraq.

THIS WEEK IN
IRAQ Online

www.mnf-iraq.com

Spraying keeps pests from groves

Story and photo by Spc. Rodney Foliente
4th Infantry Division

BAGHDAD — The Iraq Ministry of Agriculture's crop-spraying program received two new additions to its growing fleet of helicopters at the Baghdad International Airport on April 27.

The crop pest eradication program is being run by the MOA and also incorporates the combined efforts of other Iraqi government ministries, Iraqi Security Forces, Multi-National Division – Baghdad and Multi-National Corps – Iraq.

“(The Iraqi government and Coalition Forces) are working together to provide this campaign,” said Dr. Subhi Mansour Al-Jumaili, Iraqi's deputy minister of agriculture.

SkyLink Arabia, the company contracted to provide the aircraft for MOA's crop-spraying initiative, has four Russian Mi-2 helicopters, with eight fixed-wing aircraft on the way.

The MOA-led initiative mainly targets pests that destroy Iraq's date palm, wheat and barley crops, said the deputy minister. They hope to increase the protection, quantity and quality of these major crops

to open up markets for Iraq to export.

The date palm crop for Iraq is “a sustainable and viable crop that would help with economic development,” said Lt. Col. Harold Owen, a Pine Bluff, Ark., native, who serves as an agricultural program officer with MNC-I.

“This is part of the Coalition efforts to assist the government of Iraq, the Ministry of Agriculture and the farmers of Iraq as an economic development initiative to help them with their pest control management efforts, so it will improve their crops,” said Lt. Col. Owen.

The pest eradication program will yield additional benefits, said Lt. Col. Owen. It will assist in establishing a working relationship with the MOA and the farmers at the provincial level. The program will also help build the Iraqi people's confidence in their government and the MOA.

“It makes me very proud to serve here

“I hope to help. We all must help make a new life for Iraq.”



A pilot for SkyLink Arabia, a company contracted for crop-spraying by the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture, tests an Mi-2 helicopter at Baghdad International Airport on April 27.

as a Coalition partner, helping both the Iraqi people and the government of Iraq,” said Lt. Col. Owen.

Others also expressed their pride in being part of the multi-national mission.

The project helps the people of Iraq and improves its agriculture, said Alanatoli Osotov, a helicopter pilot with SkyLink Arabia.

“I will be happy to spray (crops),” the veteran Moldovan pilot said. “I hope to help. We all must help make a new life for Iraq.”

Loaned humvees have Soldiers riding in style



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Chris Towne

An American Humvee turned over to the Iraqi Army now bears the country's flag and the camouflage pattern of their uniforms.

Story by Spc. Yolanda Moreno Leon
138th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MOSUL — Iraqi Security Forces at Forward Operating Base Courage in Mosul received armored Humvees from Coalition Forces in April.

The vehicles are on loan to the Iraqi Army to help them build the confidence of their Soldiers and effectively patrol the streets of Mosul.

“We are taking some of our Humvees that we have and loaning them to the Iraqis so they can have vehicles to patrol with,” said Staff Sgt. Allen Bennett, a shop foreman with the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team's 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment. “This will ensure that Iraqi Soldiers will not have to ride in the back of an (unarmored) pickup truck.”

Bennett said the shop had to put the Iraqi flag and other markings on the loaner Humvees in order to distinguish their Humvees from our own.

Bennett said the goal is for the Iraqis to take over and get them to feel more confident on patrols and missions.



Maj. Gen. J.D. Thurman, commanding general of Multi-National Division - Baghdad, presents a gift to Assad Altaee Abu Guilal, the governor of Najaf, following a meeting in the International Zone on Friday. Maj. Gen. Thurman also met with governors from Baghdad, Babil and Karbala to discuss concerns and reaffirm their dedication to a peaceful Iraq.

Governors discuss security

Story and photos by Spc. Karl Johnson
363rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD — The commanding general of Multi-National Division - Baghdad met with four prominent Iraqi governors at the Falaniko House in the International Zone on Friday to reaffirm the leaders' joint dedication to continue working together and to discuss concerns.

"This is a decisive moment in the history of

Iraq," said Maj. Gen. J.D. Thurman, commanding general, Multi-National Division - Baghdad. "The positive steps we have made with the last three elections, and with the formation of the new government, are very important."

As Iraq returns to a state of normalcy, the people will begin to see a shift toward more civilian and less of a military presence and influence.

During the meeting, Iraqi provincial government leaders from Karbala, Babil, Najaf and Baghdad provinces and Coalition officials discussed and assessed security in each of the provinces as part of a long-term goal of transferring security from Coalition Forces to the Iraqi provincial governments.

Maj. Gen. Thurman stressed the importance of maintaining open communications to each of the governors and that "this was a decisive time for Iraq." He also said he was committed to not allow terrorists to disrupt the formation of the new government.



Gov. Aqeel Mahmoud Kareem Al Khaz'ali of Karbala greets Maj. Gen. J.D. Thurman at a leadership meeting at the Falaniko House in Baghdad.

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Hero of the Week

Marine's eye protection lives up to its billing

Story and photo by Cpl. Mark Sixbey
5th Marine Regimental Combat Team

CAMP FALLUJAH Pfc. James Burnett Jr. didn't enjoy wearing his protective eyewear underneath his night-vision goggles, but he had two good reasons to follow orders – his eyes.

The 20-year-old turret gunner with 5th Marine Regiment's 3rd Battalion, discovered the importance of ballistic eyewear firsthand when an improvised explosive device rocked his vehicle with a massive explosion during a night mission outside Fallujah in early April.

"That blast was so strong it threw me around like no tomorrow," said Pfc. Burnett, from Greenbrier, Ark. "It looked like a star cluster of 300 little dim light bulbs flying out of this huge cloud of smoke going up into the sky and draping off like the leaves of a weeping willow tree."

The blast tore off his night vision goggles, taking his issued ballistic eyeglasses along with them. The next thing he remembered was waking up on top of his equip-

ment in the smoke-filled cabin of his Humvee.

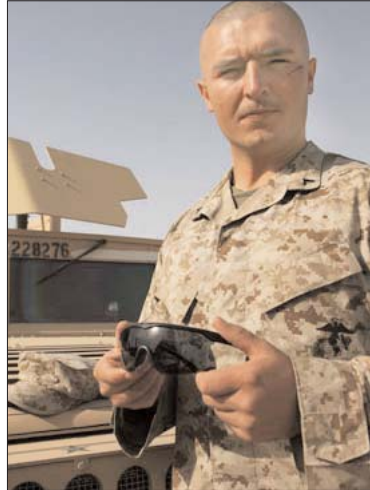
"The explosion made a crater in the road big enough for a Humvee to fall in," said Navy Seaman Eric J. Delgado, the platoon's corpsman, who was riding in the vehicle behind Burnett's.

He described the explosion as a 40-foot high shower of fiery glass sparks.

"The first thing I thought was 'Did anyone get hit?'" Seaman Delgado recalled.

When the 22-year-old from San Diego got to the vehicle, Burnett was already alert and standing in his gun turret, scanning the area for the enemy.

"I noticed he had blood on his hand and face," Seaman Delgado said. "He was



Pfc. James Burnett Jr. with the glasses that saved his eyes.

going off about how he lost his eye-pro and how he was slammed by the explosion and how big it was."

The corpsman was amazed when he took a closer look.

"His eyes were fine," he said.

Flying debris had cut two gashes in Pfc. Burnett's face, which he said he didn't feel until blood ran down his throat protector and under his flak jacket. He sustained a concussion and was evacuated to a military hospital in Balad, where doctors removed a small rock from

his face.

Pfc. Burnett commended the quick action of his driver and his vehicle commander, Lance Cpl. Wrangler Haws and Cpl. Scott Campbell, for maintaining their composure and reacting without hesitation to assess the situation and keep their vehicle from falling in the hole.



The "Sons of al Anbar" celebrate their graduation from Iraqi Army basic training in Habbaniyah on April 30 by making a human pyramid draped in the Iraqi flag.

Class

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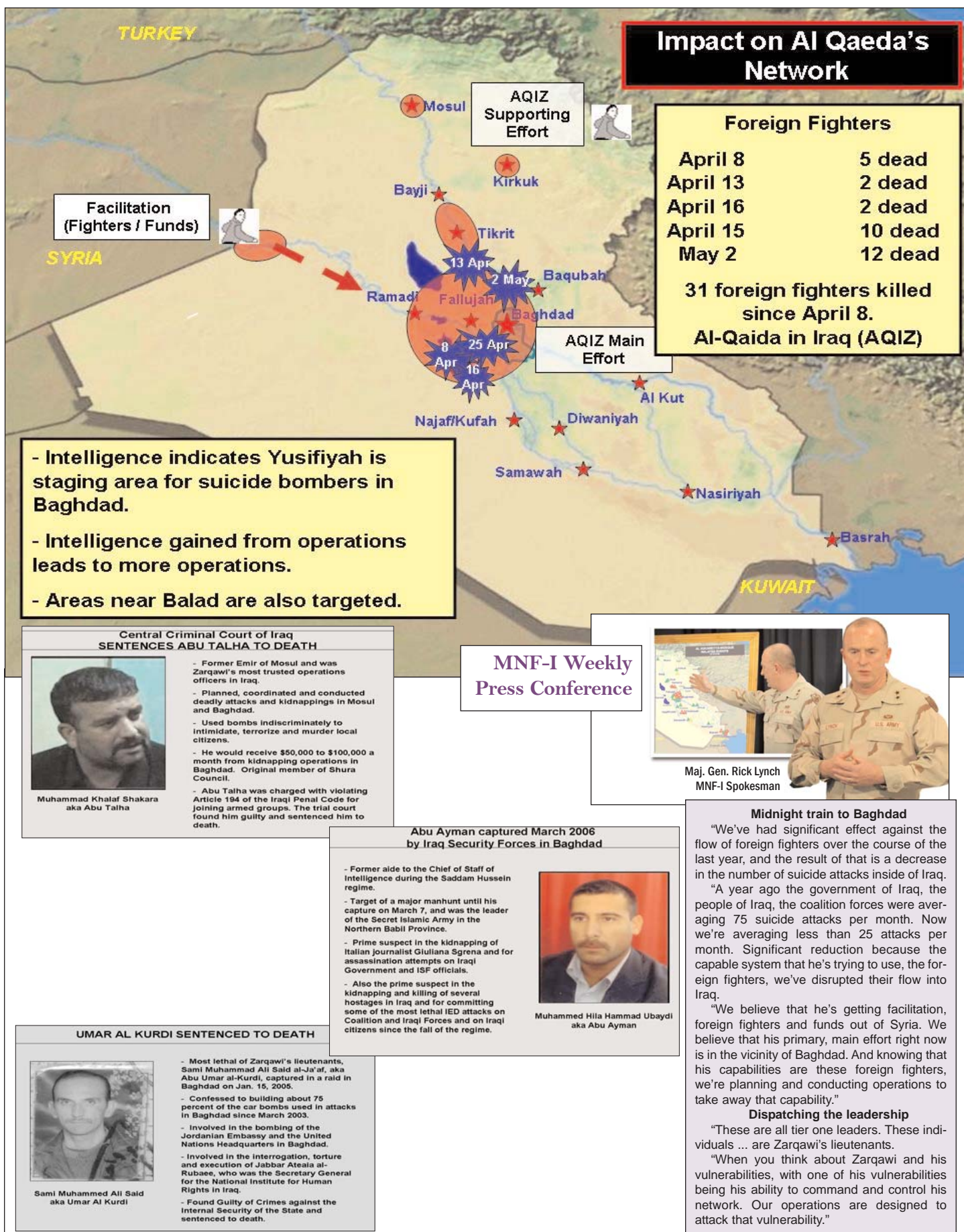
Graef. "They know the area. They know their neighborhoods. They'll be a lot better solutions out here because they know their terrain."

The ceremony commemorated the 29-day training the new Soldiers endured, which consisted of weapons training and tactical training, both with the overriding theme of team building.

The ceremony was attended by the Anbar Gov. Mamun Sumi Rasheed and Fallujah Police Chief Brig. Gen. Salah Khalil al-Ani, along with many others.

During the ceremony they were told by the officer leading their training just how proud he was of them.

"When I return to America I can tell my children and some day my grandchildren that I served with men that stood up and did the right thing for their country and to fight terrorists and chase them from Iraq so that Iraq can be a great country again," said Graef.





U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st class Bart A. Bauer

A Kamaliya woman receives bags containing food and water from Pfc. Gina Lua, from the 101st Airborne Division. The Soldiers are fostering trust between Coalition Forces, Iraqi authorities and the residents around Baghdad.

Military-issue Medicare

Soldiers deliver medical supplies to the people



A doctor from the 9th Iraqi Mechanized Division checks the blood pressure and pulse of an Iraqi woman during a medical outreach program at a clinic in Mushahda on Tuesday.

Navy photo by
Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Larson

An Iraqi woman of Mushahda shows off the medicine she received at the town clinic after attending a medical outreach initiative sponsored by Coalition Forces to meet the health needs of the residents.

Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Larson



Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Larson

Iraqi pharmacists search through numerous boxes of medical supplies for residents of Mushahda to get prescriptions filled.

U.S. Soldiers kicking it in the desert

Story by Sgt. Kristopher Joseph
Multi-National Corps-Iraq Public Affairs Office

Roofing nails

Soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division detained three terrorists and killed three others on Thursday near Samarra.

The troops worked a tip from residents that led them to three known improvised explosive device emplacements. As the Soldiers began to leave the area with the detainees, they came under small-arms fire from a nearby rooftop.

The troops suppressed the rooftop fire, then entered and killed the three attackers.

An Iraqi citizen was injured during the firefight, but still provided the Soldiers with information about the rooftop firers.

Eight is enough

Coalition Forces killed eight insurgents when they responded to an insurgent attack in central Ramadi on Thursday.

Marines of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team were attacked multiple times with rocket-propelled grenades, machine gun fire and small-arms fire from a building near the Ramadi Government Center.

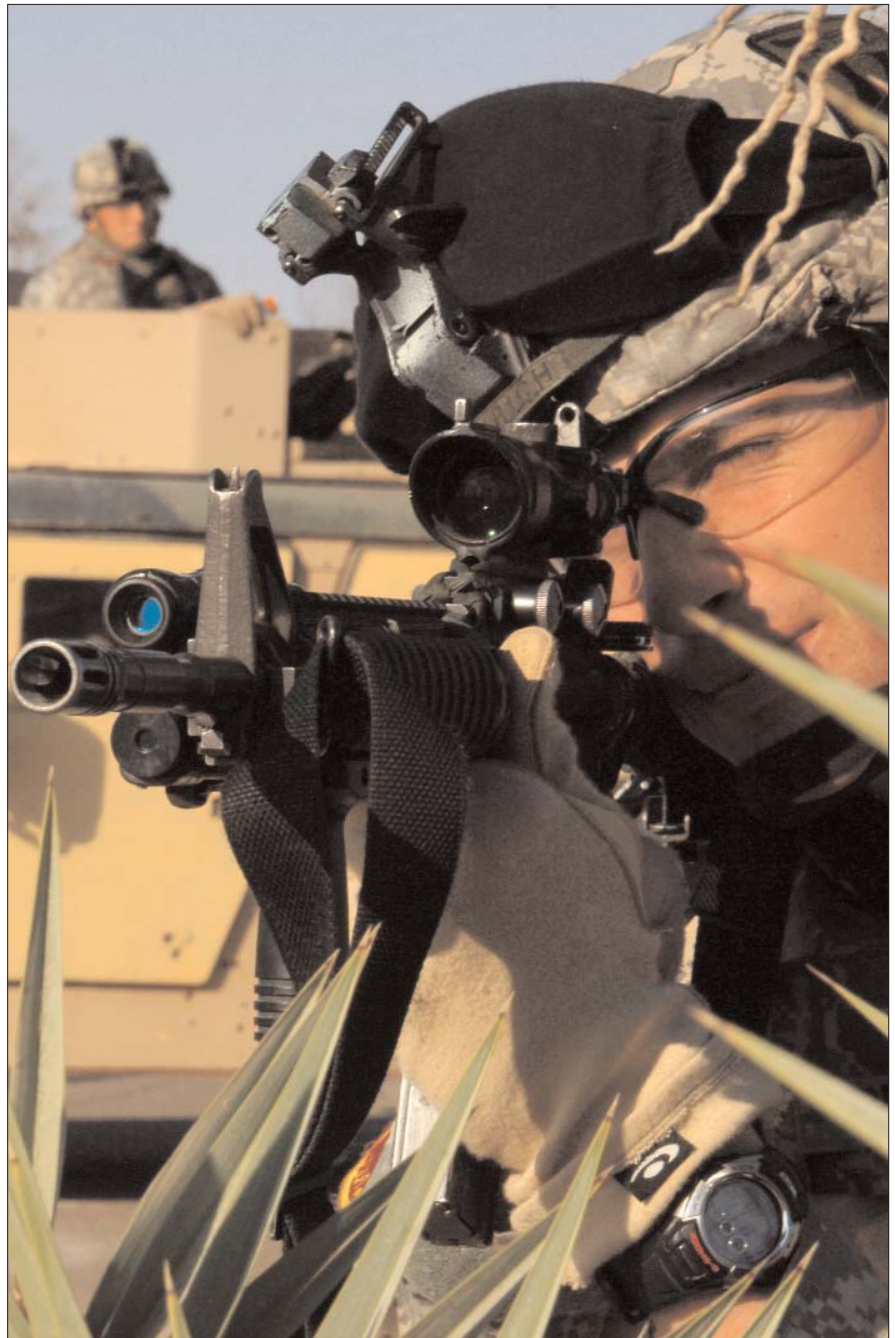
Coalition Forces responded, killing the insurgents without suffering any casualties.

The Lion Kings

Iraqi Soldiers and Police completed the fourth day of Operation Lion's Hunt in Mosul on Wednesday.

Nearly 1,500 Iraqi Soldiers and Police teamed together to conduct the mission. The goal of Lion's Hunt was to introduce a strong Iraqi Security Force presence in the city's diverse communities and clean out pockets of terrorists hiding among law abiding residents.

The Iraqi-planned effort has been well received, said Maj. Gen. Wathiq Mohammed Abdul Khadir al-Hamdani, the provincial director of police for the Ninawah Province. He stressed the importance of building strong community relationships with



U.S. Army photo by Specialist Teddy Wade

1st Lt. Graham Genrich from the 101st Airborne Division looks through the sight of his M-4 rifle during a patrol in Osha City neighborhood of Tikrit.

the Iraqi Security Forces in an effort to rid Mosul and the rest of the province of terrorists.

So far, 36 known or suspected terrorists have been detained during the operation.

Iraqi Soldiers 'Haking' away

Soldiers from the 8th Iraqi Army Division's 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade,

took the lead during a raid in the town of Hak as part of Operation Babil Perimeter. They were assisted by Soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division's 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, who provided a cordon around the town as the Iraqi Army

See OPERATIONS, next page



U.S. Air Force photo By Staff Sgt. Aaron Allmon

Soldiers from 1st Armored Division kick open a door during a combat patrol in the Al Jazeera Desert.

Operations

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Soldiers searched the homes in an effort to find suspected terrorists.

Iraqi Soldiers detained five of the men and discovered two caches around Hak, which contained munitions and weapons. After the initial search by the Iraqi Soldiers, U.S. Soldiers used K-9 dogs and metal detectors to search the areas again and located two additional caches.

Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers discovered bomb-making materials, triggering

devices, mortars and grenade launchers.

"We are trying to make this town as safe as possible," said Capt. Kaohem Salim, an officer with the 8th Iraqi Army Division. "I am an Iraqi. I must protect my country. My people need me to work. Every time we take the lead in these operations, it takes us closer to standing up on our own one day."

"I am an Iraqi. I must protect my country. My people need me to work. Every time we take the lead in these operations, it takes us closer to standing up on our own one day."

Defeating the terrorist without the help of American Soldiers is the level Iraqi Army Soldiers are trying to achieve, he said.

Money to burn

Coalition Forces

killed 10 terrorists, three of them wearing suicide vests, and wounded one 30

miles southwest of Balad while searching for an al-Qaida terrorist leader. Upon the troops' arrival, one terrorist attempted to engage the assault troops with a pistol. The terrorist was shot before he could fire his weapon. As the wounded terrorist fell backward, he reached toward his chest and detonated a suicide vest. None of the assault troops were harmed in the explosion.

Meanwhile, the troops killed nine other terrorists, seven of whom exited the safe house during the fight and two who were killed inside. Two of the nine terrorists were wearing suicide vests, but the troops killed these bombers before either could detonate his vest.

The troops found \$1,000 in U.S. currency on one terrorist and after the suicide bomber detonated his vest, they noticed hundreds of scattered pieces of charred U.S. bills.

ISF close to leading operations



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Timothy W. Story

A 101st Airborne Division Soldier and an 6th Iraqi Army Division Soldier stand guard together outside of a checkpoint in Deshir.



Maj. Gen. Thomas R. Turner II, the commander of Multi-National Division - North and the 101st Airborne Division.



Story by Sgt. Sara Wood
American Forces Press Service

All the Iraqi Security Forces in northern Iraq are engaged in the fight against terrorism and are making progress toward leading operations early next year, said the U.S. general in charge of operations in the area.

U.S. Forces in the northern provinces are focused on building an Iraqi Security Force capable of providing domestic order and denying safe haven to terrorists, said Army Maj. Gen. Thomas R. Turner II, the commander of Multi-National Division - North and the 101st Airborne Division.

Four Iraqi Army divisions operate in the north, with 15 brigades and 59 battalions, Maj. Gen. Turner said. Of the 15 brigades, three are in the lead in their areas and 18 battalions are in the lead. He anticipates that by the end of summer, two of the four divisions will lead operations in their area and by early next year, all Iraqi Army units in the north will be in the lead.

The major inhibitors to independent operations are a lack of equipment and manpower, the inability of the Iraqis to sustain themselves and a lack of systems or policies in place to manage the organizations, Maj. Gen. Turner said. The Army was grown from the bottom up, and once the government is seated and a minister of defense is named, policies and systems will be developed to support the force, he said.

Iraqi Police in the north are making great progress as they partner with U.S. and Coalition forces, Maj. Gen. Turner said. The U.S. has established police transition teams in all major cities and provincial capitals in the northern provinces.

Six provincial police department headquarters, 61 district headquarters and 340 stations are operational, he said. Forces range from being poorly trained to well prepared to provide domestic order.

The U.S. has been consolidating its military bases in northern Iraq and turning many bases over to Iraqi Forces, Maj. Gen. Turner said. The U.S. is operating from 12 bases in the area now and by summer, that number will be cut to eight, he said. At the Iraqi-run bases, U.S. forces will remain in a supporting role.

Northern Iraq has seen very limited secular tension, Maj. Gen. Turner said, and the Iraqi and Coalition Forces are doing good work in the fight against terrorism.

"I think we are making great strides in the war against al-Qaida," expressed Maj. Gen. Turner. "As we take al-Qaida leaders off the street ... we do see an improvement in the security environment."

Multi-National Force Iraq Official Web Site - Microsoft Internet Explorer

WWW.MNF-IRAQ.COM FREEDOM FACT

Since March 2003, more than 150 primary care clinics have been rehabilitated and 600 medical equipment sets have been delivered to clinics throughout Iraq. There are 142 model primary health care centers being constructed in Iraq.

Search

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Freedom Fact

Rebuilding Iraq

Projects that are shaping a nation

Ninawa Province

About 300 students and 15 teachers in the Ninawa Province will benefit from a school renovation, which will provide a better learning environment.

Baghdad

Nearly 500 electrical transformers were purchased for the Ministry of Electricity. Once installed and activated they will provide reliable energy to more than 200,000 Baghdad residents.

Aqr

About 200 homes in Aqr and several nearby towns have clean, potable water with the installation of a water pump.



Baghdad

Renovations to the Baghdad Central Railroad station are complete. The station will serve more than 4.4 million passengers annually.



Basra

Upgrades to a checkpoint in Basra will provide enhanced security and force protection to more than one million people traveling in and around the city.

Basra

More than 80,000 Basra residents are getting fresh water from 21 miles of installed pipe.



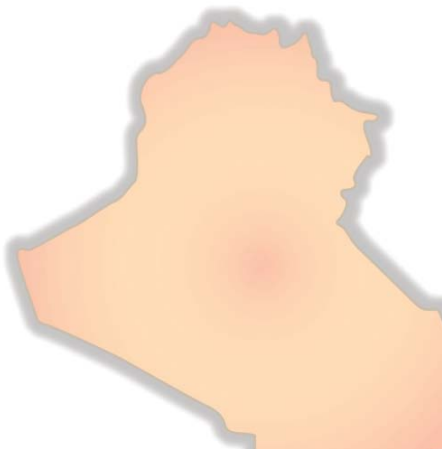
U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. John M. Foster

Iraqi policemen conduct a cordon and search of homes in Mosul on Tuesday.

Taking to the streets

Mosul's Police ready to go and making a stand in the northern city

Photos can be found on www.mnf-iraq.com



Iraqi Police check documents found in a car during a patrol in Mosul.

U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. John M. Foster



Policemen stack on a door as they prepare to enter a room during a room clearing exercise at FOB Kalsu Wednesday.

U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Katrina Beeler



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. John M. Foster

During a home search, Iraqi Police rush up stairs to detain a suspect.